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ABSTRACT

Although educational researchers are beginning to recognize the influence of organizational culture on organizational productivity, the term "organizational culture" has been defined from a variety of perspectives. This paper presents findings of a case study that investigated the cultural characteristics of a junior high school recognized for its effectiveness. The school was located in an urban school district with a 40-50 percent dropout rate. Data were collected through document analysis, observation, and interviews with 25 students, 11 teachers, and 2 administrators (a random sample from a population of 771). Kluchohn and Strodbeck's organizational-cultural paradigm (1961) is used to describe the school's basic assumptions about: (1) humanity's relationship to nature; (2) the nature of reality and truth; (3) the nature of human nature; (4) the nature of human activity; and (5) the nature of human relationships. Teachers expressed the following core values--trust, achievement, openness, innovation, networking, involvement, and recognition. A conclusion is that school culture is a sequence of complex shared behavior patterns that connect the artifacts, core values, and underlying assumptions that form a cultural paradigm. This culture will sustain itself over time as long as the linkages help the school survive. (LMI)

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The Identification of Underlying Cultural Assumptions in an Effective School

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The Identification of Underlying Cultural Assumptions in an Effective School

The concept of organizational culture and its influence on organizational productivity is gaining acceptance among individuals that recognize the powerfulness of the informal side of organizations. However, varying viewpoints of this relationship make it difficult to clearly delineate the meaning of organizational culture. Researchers have attempted to define the essence of this phenomenon from a variety of viewpoints. These varying viewpoints focus on behavioral regularities (Goffman,1959; 1967, Van Maanen, 1979), organizational norms (Homans,1950), dominant- espoused values (Deal and Kennedy, 1982), philosophical notions (Pascale and Athos, 1981; Ouchi,1981), organizational conduct (Ritti and Funkhouse,1982), and organizational climate (Tagiuri and Litwin,1968).

These interpretations of organizational culture, while opening various areas for fascinating research, fail to uncover the quintessence of culture according to Schein (1985). He states that the term culture should be reserved for the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of the organization, that operates unconsciously, and that define basic "taken-for-granted" behavior resulting from the organization's view of itself and its environment. These assumptions come to be taken for granted because they solve an organization's problems repeatedly and reliably (Schein, 1985, p. 6).

The purpose of this paper is to report findings about the culture of an effective school. The paper establishes a set of orientations for viewing culture, describes the data collection and analysis process used in this study, identifies the cultural characteristics of an effective school, and indicates the strategies used to maintain the culture. The paper concludes by defining the elements of school culture.

For the past three decades, attempts by school reformers to improve our nation's schools have yielded only a few pockets of success. Fullan (1991) separates this period of educational change into four phases. He sites the adoption phase (1960s), implementation failure phase (1970-77),

implementation success phase (1978-82), and the intensification versus restructuring phase (1983-90). Presently, school intensification is characterized as bolstering programs, such as Head Start, that have proven to be effective over time. School restructuring refers to educational approaches such as home schooling, the voucher system, charter schools, choice, magnet schools, and school within a school.

Our ability to improve this nation's schools will require more than embracing the programs of intensification or restructuring. In either approach, a culture shift in most schools will need to occur regardless of the path taken. This transformation process will have to take place in each ineffective school. Change of this magnitude will require a better understanding of the relationship between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness. This understanding will be especially vital to those in leadership roles who attempt to improve student outcomes in their schools. Any approach used to transform an ineffective school into an effective school will require developing strategies grounded in concepts of organizational culture.

Site of the Study

Students in many urban school districts must face a multitude of challenges while pursuing a quality education. Gang violence, drugs, teen pregnancy and a host of other societal ills are intertwining fabrics woven into the tapestry of inner cities across the nation. The backdrop for this study reveals an urban school district with many of its buildings decaying, teachers facing salary roll-backs, and a history of poor student performance districtwide. Composed of a student population with a significant number of "high-risk"students, this urban school district has a dropout rate between 40% and 50%.

Nestled in the tapestry of this urban district is a beacon of hope. The W. B. Mahone Junior High School (pseudonym) has distinguished itself as a highly effective school while many other schools have failed. This school has been acknowledged as a national school of excellence twice recently. Achievement at this school also includes the recognition of the principal and some faculty members as outstanding educators. Artifacts in the form of plaques, trophies, and certificates, received from national

organizations, federal agencies, and citywide groups acknowledge the effectiveness of this urban school. Additionally, the parents of students view the school as providing an outstanding educational opportunity for the children.

During the 1990-91 school year, 43.2% of the students at Mahone Junior High received free or reduced lunch. Usually schools with a significant number of students receiving free or reduced lunch have poor attendance rates, low student academic achievement, and severe discipline problems. At Mahone, the average daily attendance was 93.31% between 1987 and 1990 at the school participating in this study. Morevoer, only 3 suspensions were recorded during the 1990-91 school year and were classified as minor. No major student suspension had occurred during the previous four years.

Student achievement is a distinctive characteristic of this effective school. Students scored at least one grade level above their actual year in school during the 1990-91 school year. This level of achievement took place in the areas of reading and mathematics. Approximately 98.5% of all students attending this school were promoted to the next grade level. However, a few students were required to repeat subjects such as English, mathematics, science, and social studies on their grade level. The students' levels of achievement extend beyond their academic performance to excellence in extra-curricular activities. These activities range from Math Club to athletics teams. Students participating in these activities consistently performed exceptionally well. Mahone teams captured several championships at various levels of competition.

Inspite of the environmental conditions that surround W.B. Mahone Junior High School, the school continues to produce outstanding graduates. To investigate this phenomenon, a case study approach was used. The subjects were drawn from a population of 724 students, 1 principal, 2 assistant principals, and 48 teachers. The sample also includes representatives from the support staff. This support staff contains 4 aides, 12 clerical workers, 4 counselors, 9 maintenance personnel, 6 food service persons, 1 nurse, and 2 security guards.

Complete census lists were obtained for teachers and students from the district office. A table of random numbers was used to draw a sample from each census list. Twenty-five students, 11 faculty members, and 2 administrators at the junior high school were chosen and added to this random sample.

Methodology and Data Analysis

A qualitative approach was used to investigate the culture of this effective school by analyzing school documents, nonparticipant observations, and indepth interviews. The methodology included a review of letters, memoranda, agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, written reports of events, administrative documents, progress reports, and other internal documents. These documents were used to identify the types of activities, frequency, and level of participation of members in this effective school. Nonparticipant observations were used to identify artifacts as well as observe the behavior of members in the organization. These observations took place in the hallways, playground, cafeteria, outer office of principal, library, and teachers' lounge before and after the school day.

In-depth interviews were used to collaborated the findings with other information obtained. These interviews were conducted with a representative sample of students, teachers, and administrators in the school. The interview questions were derived from the work of Demming (1986) in organizational effectiveness and Furtwengler (1990) in effective school research. These researchers have identified specific quality indicators found in effective organizations. Furtwengler (1990) described ten quality indicators in effective schools that created and maintained the quality culture of effective schools. An interview protocol was developed from these quality indicators. The interview questions made it possible to identify the absence or presence of a quality indicator and to uncover the shared processes between school members that supported the quality culture of the effective school in this study.

Three research questions were generated from each quality indicator. The first research question under each quality indicator required the respondents to acknowledge the presence or absence of the indicator.

The second research question required respondents to identify the processes associated with each quality indicator. The third research question required respondents to assess how they and/or other members in the school felt about the shared processes associated with the quality indicators. Both the second and third research questions were open-ended.

Responses from each interviewee were transcribed and grouped into ten specific categories. These categories included the following: (a) continuous improvement ethic, (b) self-regulation, (c) openness to feedback, (d) extension of trust, (e) pride in work, (f) resource development, (g) freedom to innovate, (h) active involvement, (i) dispersed leadership, and (j) cultural and symbolic management. Major themes were then teased from the interview data by identifying common expressions or statements used by the interviewees. The major themes helped identify the cultural values expressed. These expressed values were later compared to the behavior of members of the school to assist in determining the core values of members in the school. Data were further analyzed to determine the relationship of the artifacts, core values, and the underlying assumptions to the behavior of members at the school.

I collected and analyzed documents as suggested by Yin (1984), which included the following: "letters, memoranda, and other communiqués; agendas, announcements, and minutes of meetings; and administrative documents--progress reports, and other internal documents" (p. 79). Past editions of the school newsletter were reviewed. Major categories were established such as: (a) policies and procedures, (b) teachers' meetings, (c) student activities, (d) community concerns, and (e) congratulation/recognition. The policies and procedures category usually contained announcements alerting teachers or students to perform a certain task. For example, a notebook check in homerooms by homeroom teachers will occur on a particular day. The teachers' meetings category refers to announcements informing teachers to attend certain types of meetings or conferences. The students' activities category identified academic and nonacademic activities for students to attend. Community

concerns acknowledged matters related to community activities such as caroling at the Children's Hospital. The congratulation/recognition category revealed accomplishments by all members of the school. This category was further divided into student achievements and faculty achievements.

An additional source of documentation that was analyzed included the use of archival records (Yin, 1984). These archival records included: "records showing the number of students served over a given period of time; and survey data, such as census records or previously collected data about the site" (p. 89). These records were obtained from files stored at the school. A content analysis was used to cross validate information obtained from interviews, artifacts, and written communications. Data obtained from these archival records contained census information, data on programs offered to students, schoolwide recognition of achievements, parent community activities, student services, and extracurricular activities for students. This information was also placed in the previously mentioned categories.

Data related to the behaviors of members in the school were collected by noting the interaction between students, teachers, teachers and students, and teachers and administrators. Additionally, the amount of time teachers, administrators, and students stayed in the school building was analyzed. Data obtained from these observations of members in the school were used to collaborate the major themes identified from the respondents' interviews, written communications, shared processes, and the school's artifacts. To reveal the culture of this effective school, data were examined in light of the underlying cultural assumptions that members in organizations must address. This resulted in identifying a set of behaviors by members in organizations that allow them to survive. These collective behaviors give rise to the cultural orientation of an organization.

Cultural Characteristics of an Effective School

Underlying Cultural Assumption

The underlying cultural assumptions form a cultural paradigm that is the bedrock of organizational life. The cultural paradigm serves as a template that guides the behaviors of members in an organization. These behaviors result in various cultural orientations. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) described three orientations related to underlying cultural assumption. These were the "doing orientation," "being orientation," and the "being-in-becoming orientation ". The doing orientation correlates with organizations that assume that nature can be controlled, thus posing a pragmatic orientation toward the nature of reality, and a belief in human perfection. The being orientation assumes that nature is all powerful and humanity is subservient to it. The being-in-becoming orientation emphasizes self-development, self-actualization, and fulfilling one's potential.

Depicting the cultural orientation requires using the data collected to interpret the basic assumptions of an organization's culture as described by Kluchohn and Strodtbeck (1961). Their dimensions of a cultural paradigm in an organization include: (a) humanity's relationship to nature, (b) the nature of reality and truth, (c) the nature of human nature, (d) the nature of human activity, and (e) the nature of human relationships.

Humanity's Relationship to Nature

This cultural dimension describes the manner in which members in an organization collectively view and react to environmental factors. When members in an organization view their environment as dominating, their behavior is often passive. Many teachers in urban settings feel that the vast majority of their students enter school with too much baggage. Saddled with many of societal ills, such as indigent single parent families, drugs, and violence, teachers tend to view their chances of increasing the levels of knowledge and skills of these students as hopeless. In addition, many teachers feel that urban communities are apathetic when it comes to improving the educational opportunities for young people. Members of schools that share these views over time will tend to develop and maintain collective behavior patterns of submission. The watchword in schools of

this type is survival. The focus in these schools is to keep the lid on it and maintain the status quo. This type of collective behavior does little to increase student outcomes.

The study of the culture in W.B. Mahone Junior High School reveals that members in the school refute the view of environmental dominance. Rather, their collective behaviors demonstrate a harmonizing view of themselves with the environment. To work in conjunction with the environment, members of this effective school have developed a process for internal regulation. By embracing the concepts of involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission, the school has developed and maintained a process of self-regulating (Denison, 1990).

For example, weekly faculty meetings are used to monitor the progress of students and the school. These gatherings may occur as faculty, departmental, or interdisciplinary meetings. Teachers regularly attend these forums which attests to their high level of involvement. The focus of these meetings is usually student achievement or school improvement. Members of the faculty use quantitative and qualitative data to develop strategies to guide their instructional practices and plan for school improvement. This collective behavior of faculty members represents an organizational norm because it consistently occurs. This norm occurs consistently in the school because it has proven to be effective over time. Insights gained from weekly sessions by the teachers allow the school to adjust internally to the external environment. Thus, this collective behavior affords the school the opportunity to adapt to rather than be dominated by the environment.

The Nature of Reality and Truth

The nature of reality and truth reflects underlying assumptions illustrates how members in an organization determine reality from fantasy. Associated with this construct is the members' view of time and space. The activities in the weekly faculty meetings--regardless of its configuration-- exemplify how teachers at W.B. Mahone Junior High School define reality on both physical and social levels. Physical reality is determined by the use of empirical data to assist in developing strategies for internal regulation. As previously mentioned, results from various

types of empirical measurements of student achievement and school performance are consistently used to guide practice. Often the development of strategies to address the issues uncovered by empirical evidence require social validation. For example, several strategies may emerge to increase students reading scores. Through consensus, teachers collectively decide to try a particular approach. This method of decision making often results in the development of innovative approaches to solving issues. The data shows that the openness of members of the faculty to share experiences that might be helpful has a great deal of influence on this process.

Basic assumptions that members in organizations have about time reflect a past, present, or future orientation (Kluchohn and Strodtbeck, 1961). Typically, members of ineffective schools have a past and/or present time orientations. It is not unusual to identify obsolete practices employed by school administrators at ineffective school. When questioning administrators about outdated practices or procedures,they usually reply, "That's how we've done it in the past." Teachers often use past instructional apporaches that are ineffective as well. School districts and schools that continually embrace the latest educational fade have a present orientation. Their need to show improvement in student outcomes usually drives this orientation. However, the continual introduction of new programs or methods to improve student outcomes rarely allows school members to institutionalize the practices. This usually results in teacher frustration, no significant improvement in student outcomes, and a waste of time and other resources. The effective school in this study clearly has a future orientation. Using test data to guide future instructional practice and requiring all students to take a course in computer application serve as examples of Mahone Junior High School's future orientation.

The description of time orientations of different cultures by Edward T. Hall (1977) adds depth to the analysis and interpretation of the effective school in this study. Hall work reveals that cultures view time as monochronic or polychronic. When viewing these concepts in the context of an organization, monochronic time reflects a high degree of control, coordination, and efficiency. Many schools have a monochronic view of

time. This is apparent from their bell schedules. Often schools have only one bell schedule that direct school activities. This structure drastically limits the ability of members of a school to adapt to changes or accommodate innovative approaches to solving organizational problems that might require additional time. In stark contrast are cultures with polyochronic views of time. Typically, schools that have a present orientation view time from a polychronic perspective. This view encourages members of the school to respond to crisis after crisis rather than developing holistic approaches to resolving issues.

Evidence from this study reveals that members in this effective school views time not as monochronic nor polychronic. The behaviors of members suggest that the school's culture view time from a "quasi-monochronic" perspective. This means that school operates within a bureaucratic structure with the flexibility to adjust to changing dynamics. Faculty members at the W.B. Mahone Junior High School discovered from multiple sources of data that a certain segment of the student population was failing to post satisfactory grades. To remedy the problem, teachers at the school created an extended-day program and a Saturday Academy. By doing this the school extends its structure to include after school and Saturday classes. Arranging instructional time in this manner allows faculty to have more time and more space in the school building to work creatively with the targeted population. The bell schedule illustrates a "quasi-monochronic" view of time by this effective school. The school has a bell schedule for Mondays and a different schedule for Tuesdays through Fridays. This gives members in the school the flexibility to adjust to variations that arise.

The Nature of Human Nature

The belief of individuals in an organization as to the intrinsic quality of a human being is the crux of this underlying assumption. According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), cultures may view individuals as basically good, evil, neutral, or a mixture of good and bad. Securely fixed to this assumption is the degree of perfectibility of an individual. Schein (1992) interprets this underlying assumption in terms of how members view each other in an organizational context.

In the midst of urban decay, schools often find themselves in battle zones. As a consequence, many schools lack a safe environment. In a recent report for the Illinois Federation of Teachers, 39% of members respondents said that their colleagues had been victims of student violence, and 57% had witnessed assaults on teachers (Ettinger, 1994). It should come as no surprise that teachers could view some students as evil.

However, the behaviors of teachers at W.B. Mahone Junior High School suggest that teachers view their students as intrinsically good and perfectible. There were no indications by teachers through interview comments or behavior patterns that suggested that teachers felt unsafe. School records on student behavior reveal that no major suspensions occurred in the school between 1987 to 1990. During this period, however, one minor suspension was reported in 1988 and three in 1990.

The principal's views of teachers and the interaction of teachers with students illustrate the belief of human perfectibility. The principal encourages teachers to be innovative in accomplishing the goals of the school. Often this requires additional teacher training. The principal acts as a facilitator in providing the resources to assist the teachers to become more proficient in the tasks they are about to engage. The principal provides a support system for innovative projects and activities. By collaborating with the teachers, the principal assists teachers in identifying the resources to accomplish the goals of members in the school. These resources may include time needed for meetings, materials, and use of outside experts.

The interaction between teachers and students indicate that teachers' believe that students are perfectible thorough hard work. Approximately 52% of teacher-sponsored activities--not including class responsibilities-- involve student participation (Mells, 1992). These activities included academic and nonacademic activities. Some of the academic activities included a basic skills program, computer literacy program, foreign language program, extended-day program, gifted and talented program, enrichment program, and a remediation program. The nonacademic program includes athletic activities such as basketball (boys and girls), track and field, and tennis.

Parents and the business community also assisted in providing services to students at this school. Sixteen parent/business community groups sponsored activities for students in this school. Seven hundred volunteers regularly provided service to students in this school. These activities attempted increase student performance in a variety of areas. As one teacher stated:

> I think that most of the staff members here at the school are involved--let's see, to what do I compare it to--they are involved well beyond what is expected. I am involved in at least three other activities outside of my regular two. And I would think that most teachers here are involved in at least two other extra-curricula support activities.

The Nature of Human Activity

The assumptions about the environment, reality, and human nature, describe how members view activity. The activities of members of ineffective schools usually depict passive and fatalistic behaviors. Such behaviors do little to promote student achievement and school improvement. On the other hand, members at W.B. Mahone Junior High School view themselves quite differently.

Because members in this effective school refute the notion of environmental dominance, they actively engage in processes of internal regulation in order to manipulate and control when possible environmental factors that might adversely affect their goal of student achievement and school improvement. For example, members in this effective school meet on a regular basis to identify problems related to student achievement and school improvement. They continually use qualitative and quantitative data to identify issues facing the school. These processes represent a pragmatic approach toward defining the nature of reality for the school. In addition to these beliefs about the environment and reality, members feel that people are perfectible. According to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), cultures with "doing" orientations assume that nature can be controlled and manipulated. These

cultures use a pragmatic approach to define reality and truth and believe in human perfectibility. Thus, the members in this effective school take charge and actively engage in reaching their goals of student achievement and school improvement.

The following process illustrates a "doing" orientation. At the beginning of the school year, each teacher evaluates the achievement levels of their students. Then a meeting takes place with each teacher and an administrator. The teacher and administrator develop a plan to improve student achievement in each class. A second meeting occurs around the midpoint of the school year. The administrator receives feedback from the teacher on the progress of each class. The final meeting occurs at the end of the year. The teacher is evaluated on the performance of the students relative to the stated objectives of the plan. The emphasis in this process is student academic achievement.

The school addresses nonacademic achievement as well. The principal stated: 'When they [teachers] come to me at the beginning of the year, I say, "what do you want do to other than teach . . . there is more in this building to do beside teaching'. Then, faculty members select two or more student activities other than their teaching responsibilities to sponsor for students that year. The criteria for selecting activities allow teachers to choose according to the teacher's interest.

The Nature of Human Relationships

Key among the cultural assumptions in this effective school is the manner in which teachers relate to each other. Teachers view their relationship with each other as cooperative rather than competitive. The teachers in this effective school usually initiate activities to address issues affecting student achievement. This often happens in a group setting. The principal stated, "Before they get to me it has to get through the group process." Developing and sustaining mutual respect is vital to sustaining a group effort according to Kouzes and Posner (1987).

The manner in which teachers gain and maintain respect occurs in two fashions. First, teachers gain respect from other teachers at the school by their level of performance. One teacher stated: "You gain respect by what you do and what you produce.... If it is a literature contest, you are

expected to push your students to the top." Another mechanism teachers use to develop and maintain respect among their peers in collaboration. Another teacher stated: Teachers gain and maintain respect by sharing ideas and working together and coming to a consensus. The evidence shows that teachers in this effective school trust each other because trust is at the heart of collaboration (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

The cultural paradigm formed by this effective school is a result of members' views of humanity's relationship to nature, the nature of reality and truth, the nature of human nature, the nature of human activity, and the nature of human relationships. These views translate into a set of behavior patterns that guide members through daily activities. At the crux of the behavior patterns is a set of core values. These core values are a direct result of school members having developed and maintained behavior patterns that have proven to be reliable and aids in accomplishing the goals of the school.

Core Values

Core values are espoused values that are congruent with the underlying assumptions of an organization (Ouchi, 1981; Pascale & Athos, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Comments from the teachers' interview data reflect that their core values are trust, achievement, openness, innovation, networking, involvement, and recognition.

Core Value: Trust

The core value Trust is a value that is very important to teachers in this effective school. This core value allows teachers to develop and maintain a collaborative environment in the school. Teachers rely on each other to assist in completing school projects. For example, the principal and a group of teachers collaboratively created a program to address the needs of low achieving students. Collaboration of this nature usually ocurs when members of a group trust each other. Thus, the Saturday Academy illustrates an artifact derived from this core value.

Core Value: Achievement

The philosophy that drives this core value of achievement seems to be "win, win, win." The principal serves as the catalyst that initiates and maintains the win-win-win philosophy through a series of shared

processes. She communicates this philosophy through her behavior. When it comes to assisting students and/or teachers in achieving their goals, the principal is relentless. She often spends additional hours after school and weekends to accomplish certain tasks. The win-win-win trait is present in the behaviors of teachers as well. Tapping in to all available resources to accomplish the goals of the school, faculty members involve themselves in activities to further the cause of their students. They also spent an enormous amount of time and energy to this end. Awards, trophies, and certificates of achievement found in this effective school are artifacts that link to this core value.

Core Value: Openness

The evidence showed that teachers were very open to information useful to the progress of their students. Teachers participated in a series of shared processes to gather information through a variety of sources and utilizing several methods; for example, student daily objective sheets, reviewing students' standardized test scores, and networking among teachers and parents. These shared processes yielded artifacts, such as formal and informal meetings.

Core Value: Innovation

The core value of innovation is manifest in shared processes among the faculty. Through a series of shared processes the administration of the school encourages teachers to experiment with ways to improve student achievement. By being enabled to act without fear of failing or being punished, faculty members can challenge processes and change the status quo. Unconventional approaches to instruction and the school-within-a-school project are examples of the artifacts linking to this value.

Core Value: Networking

Teachers rely on networking in the school to learn from each other. The shared processes associated with teacher networking occurs directly and indirectly. Direct networking happens between teachers in staff meetings, in- service training, in the lunchroom, and in hallways. The indirect networking occurs by the use of various communiqués, especially the weekly newsletter. Among the various types of information exchanged in networking was information related to student achievement.

Therefore, staff meetings and the school newsletter are artifacts that link to this core value.

Core Value: Involvement

Involvement describes how the shared processes of school members related to activities for student improvement. Teachers involve themselves by attending various functions to improve their skills. These functions include attending conferences, inservice training, and staff development. Teachers apply information from these shared processes to the classroom. A second set of shared processes occurs when teachers sponsor or assist in sponsoring a club or activity. The shared processes associated with these activities usually focus on student achievement. The artifacts associated with this core value result in teachers and students going well beyond the normal school day or school week to accomplish a task. Thus, linkages exist between artifacts such as conferences, inservice training, and staff development to this core value.

Summary

The cultural paradigm of W.B.Mahone Junior High School reflects the collective views of its members regarding humanity's relationship to nature, the nature of reality and truth, the nature of human nature, the nature of human activity, and the nature of human relationships. As members of the school strive for organizational goals in their environment, complex patterns of behavior develop among those members. When these complex patterns of behavior assist in achieving the goals of the school over time, they become shared processes among members. Since these processes are effective, they become valuable to members of the school. Thus,they form a set of core values that members share. Theses core values continually perpetuate the complex patterns of behavior members in this effective school. The result is student achievement and school improvement.

The results of this study of an effective urban school may generate a new perspective from which to understand school culture. The resultant set of propositions for comprehending the concept of school cultureis as follows:

School Culture Propositions

(1) School culture is holistic and it influences all parts of an organization.
(2) School culture produces complex patterns of behavior of members in a school.
(3) These complex behaviors patterns serve as a mechanism that produces artifacts.
(4) These complex behaviors patterns serve as a mechanism that link artifacts, core values, and underlying assumptions.
(5) This linkage helps form the cultural paradigm of a school.
Therefore, school culture is a sequence of complex shared behavior patterns that connect the artifacts, core values, and underlying assumptions that form a cultural paradigm. This cultural will sustain itself over time as long as the linkages help the school surive.

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